

## Envirodex

compiled by Kevin Brady

Tonnes of hazardous waste that enters the Canadian environment each year: **five million**

Percentage of this waste that enters the environment untreated: **80**

Percentage of these wastes that are generated in Ontario: **59**

Number of synthetic chemicals in use globally: **1,000 to 2,000**

Estimated percentage of the population with some level of synthetic chemicals in their bodies: **100**

Greatest source of toxic chemicals entering the human body: **food**

Number of species of Lake Ontario fish and eel which have consumption restrictions on them due to contamination by toxic chemicals: **22**

Kevin Brady is a Masters student in environmental studies at York.

## The Best Damn Apology I've Ever Made.

*Due to a typographical oversight, the "best damn journalism seminar you'll ever attend" was dated November 4 rather than when it actually was, November 2. I apologize. It was a good thing I went to the Thursday seminar so that this mistake will never happen again. Sorry.*

— SID

## Correction

The Atkinson Essay Tutoring Centre was incorrectly identified in last week's article "A perfect essay."

Excalibur apologizes for the error.

# Feeling cramped?

## Universities suffer highest enrolment ever

by Heather Ratteray

Complaints of inadequate facilities, professor inaccessibility and insufficient funding are accompanying the highest enrolment record of full-time students at Canadian universities.

A survey conducted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) in cooperation with the Association of Atlantic Universities and the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), shows the number to have passed the half-million mark for the first time in history. This is a 3.2 per cent increase over the same period last year, which makes the 1989-90 academic year the 10th straight in record enrolments.

This growth, distributed through all the provinces, has left many wondering whether or not the universities are able to fulfil

the demands of larger student bodies.

Dr. Will Sayers, director of communications for the COU, says, "The universities are close to their capacity level now. Many won't be able to increase their load to accommodate more students next year."

The 1980s were expected to be a period of declining enrolments. "The demographics implied this would happen," explained Sayers. "The small number of births predicted fewer university students. However, for Ontario, a net migration into the province meant that a larger percentage than expected attended."

Greg Elmer, communications director of the Ontario Federation of Students, says, "It's obvious that the universities are not able to handle such large numbers. There's a problem with overcrowding and people aren't able to get into the courses they need.

There's a push to get students in and out as soon as possible, but there's just not enough equipment and resources to do that. I heard about a guy at York who actually offered to pay people to drop a course just so he could graduate."

"There's no question about it," agrees Jane Arnold, chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students. "There's a big problem with overcrowding in universities which has resulted in a higher student-professor ratio. The increase in student enrolment isn't always compensated with an increase in professors."

However, Michelle Albagli, communications director of the AUCC, believes the universities are doing all that's possible under the circumstances. "They do the best they can with the facilities they have to meet their commitments," she says. "The quality was very subjective on the part of the individual. Those who want to get ahead will do so anyway; those who lag behind will have some difficulty."

Rob Wooler, communications assistant to minister of colleges and universities Sean Conway, says, "Accessibility is a priority of the government. We keep a certain number of professors and assistants to ensure that."

All parties agree the enrolment increase will have a positive effect on society. "Demographics show the workforce is shrinking. The best population is an educated one. Youth unemployment is becoming less and less of a problem," says Wooler. "Companies are adding incentives which encourage students to graduate from university."

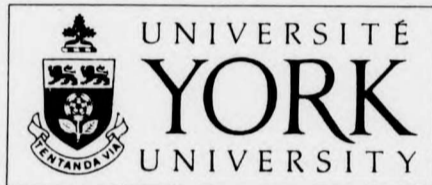
And Sayers of the COU agrees that "a highly educated citizen regenerates new jobs; he creates his own."

Though government has provided \$1.8 billion towards the operation costs of universities, most disagree with Wooler's statement that the part of costs paid by government is fair and reasonable. They feel the amount of capital provided by government is not enough; citing underfunding as a major problem universities are forced to cope with.

Says Sayers, "Students are suffering already from the increase in enrolment without sufficient funding. Government funding doesn't match the rising level of inflation and this can only result in higher tuition for students."

Explains Jane Arnold of the CFS, "The federal government gives money for education to the provincial government. A budget is set by the provincial government which adds to its' own money to that given by the federal government. But there's less money being provided and the provincial governments aren't necessarily making up the difference. Institutional costs are rising. There aren't any institutions without tuition increases. The financial burden is resting on the student."

"In other words, the easiest way to raise money is through tuition fees," says Greg Elmer. "The 7.5 per cent tuition increase last year meant a lot of students were forced to pay through their noses. There's not much analysis on the government decrease in spending. [The government believes] since students benefit, they should pay."



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